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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5092
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1107
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9876
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4314
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1774
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3506
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6974
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0546
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4592
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0891
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0894
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0611
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2837
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0485
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001323

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS, I/O; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: UNFPA PROPOSES TO EXPAND ITS BURMA PROGRAM

REF: RANGOON 704

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11. (SBU) Summary: At its September 13 Executive Board meeting in New York, UNFPA plans to propose a new four-year program for assistance in Burma that expands its current projects into new areas, including emergency obstetric care and expanded HIV/AIDS prevention, according to UNFPA's representative in Burma. This proposal would broaden much needed healthcare assistance to vulnerable populations inside Burma. We recommend supporting the proposal with the condition that UNFPA report annually to the Executive Board on its activities inside Burma; the proposal in its current form does not have this requirement. Given the uncertain and increasingly restrictive operating environment in Burma, strict monitoring and regular reporting is necessary to ensure that UNFPA's funds are spent as intended without GOB interference. End Summary.

Focus on Maternal Care and AIDS Prevention Will Remain

12. (SBU) In a meeting with econoff, UNFPA Burma Representative Dan Baker described the new program of assistance for Burma that the Executive Board will consider in New York on September 13. The current program for Burma will expire at the end of 2006. UNFPA's new proposal will continue to focus on reducing maternal mortality and preventing the spread of HIV through reproductive health information and services. UNFPA currently works in 100 townships and spends half of its funding on capacity building of township-level public health service providers and on behavior change education. These programs focus primarily on midwives, mothers, and youth. UNFPA also supplies health supplies to 112 townships and INGOs, including PSI and Marie Stopes International, and spends a small amount of money on data collection and research.

13. (SBU) The new program will add emergency obstetric care to UNFPA's program and expand its HIV/AIDS services to include men who have sex with men (MSM), one of the groups identified in the October 2005 UNAIDS review as being most at risk, yet not covered in the current program. Baker noted that this step reflects progress in GOB thinking, as government officials previously would not acknowledge that this group existed. UNFPA will coordinate its work with MSMs through community-based organizations and NGOs. Baker reported that the Minister of Health and officials at the Ministries of Immigration and Population Planning pledged to support UNFPA's efforts to assist this vulnerable group. The emergency obstetric care initiative will also include HIV/AIDS counseling, testing, and drug treatment for expectant mothers, aimed at reducing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Funding and Controls

14. (SBU) Baker said that UNFPA Burma expects to receive up to \$5 million per year from 2007 through 2010 from UNFPA and new donor money, an annual increase of \$1 million over current levels. Baker stressed that UNFPA has tight fiscal controls and only releases funding to its implementing partners for new projects when spending on completed projects is fully reconciled. To ensure that its funds are not diverted by GOB authorities, local employees travel to health stores around the country to monitor UNFPA supply deliveries. Field monitors have yet to find any discrepancies. Baker said that UNFPA expat staff still regularly receive GOB approval to travel to their project sites around the country, although it now takes about three weeks longer to receive permission than in previous years.

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15. (SBU) Comment: Despite increased GOB restrictions on INGO activities in general, UNFPA Burma continues to carry out its activities with minimal interference and provides valuable assistance to vulnerable populations inside the country. UNFPA monitors its programs closely to ensure that neither funds nor supplies are diverted to the GOB or its satellite organizations. However, the uncertain climate for UN agencies and NGOs in Burma make regular monitoring and reporting requirements more important than ever. We noted that the new proposal omits an annual reporting requirement. We should support UNFPA's proposal to expand its Burma programs, but insist that UNFPA continue to report annually to the Executive Board on its activities inside Burma. End comment.
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